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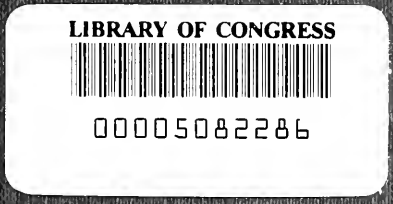

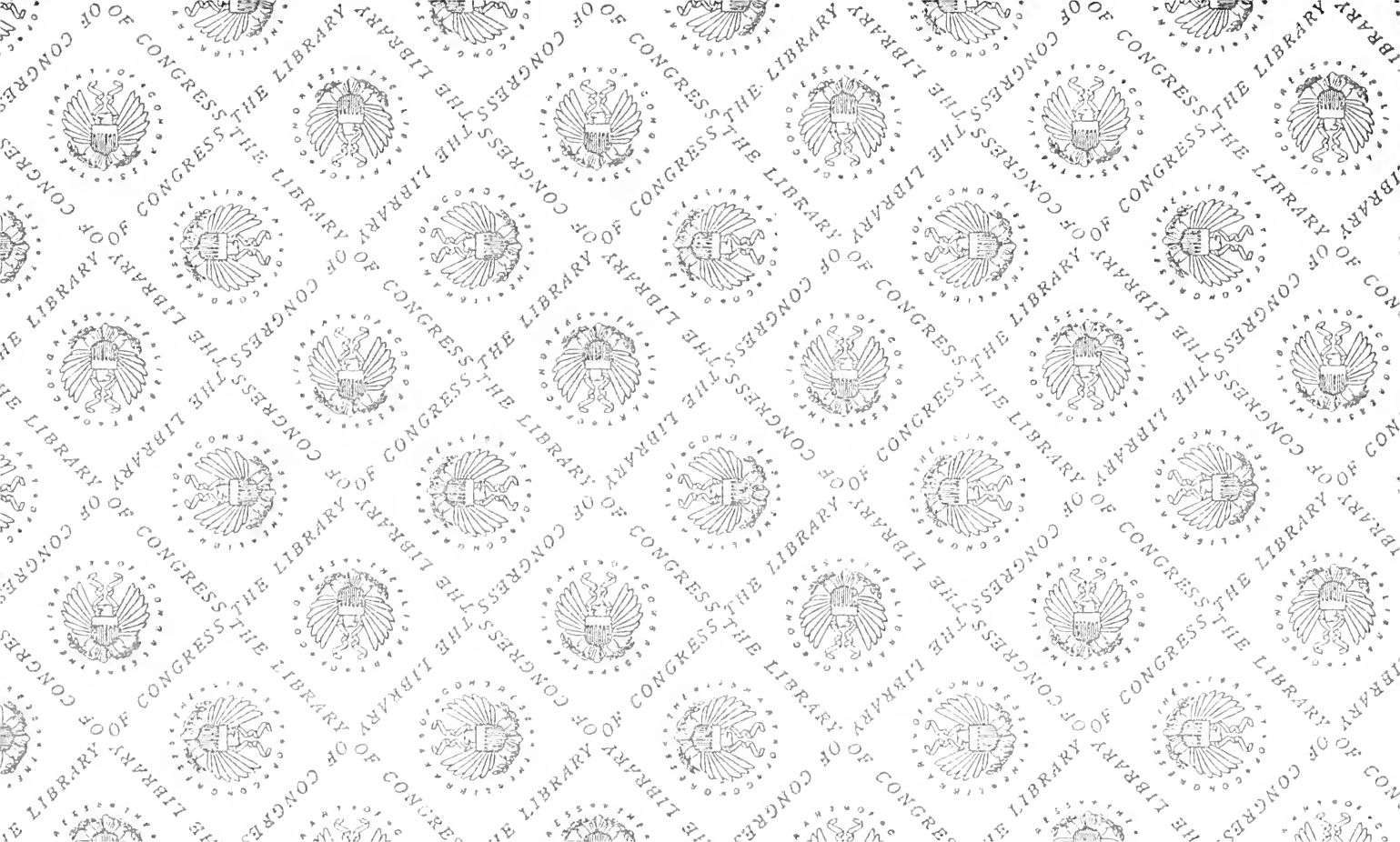
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A SPEECH

DELIVERED BY

GEORGE WOOD, ESQ.,

BEFORE A COMMITTEE

OF THE FRIENDS OF

DANIEL WEBSTER,

AT

CONSTITUTION HALL,

NEW-YORK,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, 4th MAY, 1852.

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On Tuesday Evening, 4th May, 1852.

Fellow Citizens:—

You have just been told by our worthy chairman, that the object of the addresses this evening, is to arouse your feelings. I hope he did not allude to myself, for I shall make no such attempt. Owing to my indisposition I have made no preparation, except to note down a few heads, from which I shall submit to you some remarks, without attempting to make a set speech.

The cause of our assembling, is, to consider the propriety of nominating Daniel Webster, as a candidate for the Presidency, at the general Whig Convention, which is soon to assemble. I think very erroneous views are entertained by many, as to the position of Mr. Webster, before the people of the country, and I think it is high time that those errors were removed. It shall be my endeavor this evening to present him in the true light. In doing so, I shall not attempt to disparage any of the other Whig candidates, whom I hold in high respect. I have some personal acquaintance with most of the candidates on the other side. I shall say nought against them either. My subject does not require it, and I have no disposition to do so.

I look upon the selection of a high officer of the government in a very different light from that in which it is generally considered. It is usually esteemed and treated as a *privilege*. That is the point of view in which it is held in the country from which we sprung, where all power and authority are presumed to emanate from the

crown. Hence an election is held forth as a grand gala day—a festive amusement—the subject of excitement, enthusiasm and enjoyment—such as a set of slaves who had just emerged from bondage might indulge in. I consider, on the other hand, the elective franchise on the part of the people as an exercise of high political power, as an important function of the Government. Like all such public functions it is attended with high responsibilities, and should be performed under a deep sense of duty. The making of a Legislator or a President is as important an act of political power as the enactment of laws or the administration of executive functions. It is part and parcel of our system of government, and no part of it ought to be exempted from a sense of duty. It is just as much the duty of those concerned in the selection of a President, to look to his fitness and qualifications as it is the duty of a legislature to enact good and wholesome laws, or of the President, when elected, duly to administer them.

If we all viewed the subject in this light and acted up to it, how differently would our elections be conducted.

We should not then be guided by mere *personal* predilections or preferences. What an admirable lesson we may take on this point, from the history of Cromwell. He is generally held up as a tyranical usurper, who sacrificed his king that he might rise upon the ruins of monarchy to supreme power as a military dictator. When he took the reins of government his first effort was to select the ablest and most efficient men for office. He looked around for a chief justice of England. He saw one who loomed largely above the heads of all others as an eminent jurist. It was the venerable Hale, the defender of Laud, the opposer of Cromwell's power. Cromwell urged him to take the office; Lord Hale was reluctant—because he was opposed to him and was conscientious, and could not sustain him. But Cromwell told him he had selected him as the "*fittest man in the country*," and for that reason alone, and Hale finally concluded to take the office, though he was opposed to the Government, for his country's good. Will the free people of this free country be outdone by a tyrant in performing the important function of selecting the high officers of the government? I should hope not. Where two candidates are equal in point of fitness, personal preferences may be indulged in. Not so, where there is superior fitness, especially when that superioity is clear and decided.

There are two topics to be specially considered when a candidate is proposed for popular suffrage—qualification and availability. Qualification stands first in order and is of far deeper importance.

It seems like a work of supererogation to dwell upon the qualifications of Daniel Webster. He is well known to be deeply versed in the Constitution of his country, he is skilled in public law. No man is so extensively and minutely acquainted with the public history of this country, in all its details. He is thoroughly acquainted with

the foreign relations of the United States. His reputation for talent and acquirement as a statesman, both at home and abroad, is far greater than that of any other man. His talents have a breadth and comprehension, that have seldom been equalled—never surpassed. His experience has been great in all the departments of legislation and of executive government. To all this, he adds a deep and extensive knowledge of the laws of this country. I think I may venture to say that no other candidate would venture to compete with him in all the elements of statesmanship, and when we consider the high respectability and endowments of many of those candidates it is saying a great deal, though not too much.

The only man in the country who would attempt to challenge a comparison with him, would be Henry Clay.

Mr. Webster has been well and severely tried in his patriotism. We have a great deal of profession on that subject. I am not disposed to place much confidence in mere profession, and I have generally found that those who deal the most profusely in it are the most ready to sacrifice the general good, when it comes in conflict with their personal interest. But, when a man like Mr. Webster has deliberately shaped his course and pursued it at the imminent risk of his personal popularity, and with the prospect of losing all his hopes of preferment, in order to promote what he considered for his country's good, and essential to its integrity and salvation, he may be held to be a well tried patriot.

I have, I must confess, heard of one objection to Mr. Webster. I have heard it rumored that he has been at times more or less embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs, and that when in that predicament he has felt the inconveniences of poverty and pecuniary distress. About this, I know personally nothing, and have not heard much. I have no disposition to pry into the private affairs of others. It is a matter with which we have nothing to do in the case of Mr. Webster, unless perchance it may have a bearing upon his merits as a candidate. The argument against him is this. If a man cannot manage well his own private affairs he ought not to be trusted with the affairs of others. Admitting the argument to be true, it remains to shew the truth of the major proposition as applied to him. Is it true that Mr. Webster *cannot* manage his own affairs? Or on the other hand, is it not true merely, that he *does not* manage them because his time has been devoted to the public interests, and in a great measure engrossed with them. When Mr. Webster, in early life, left the House of Representatives and moved to Boston, he determined to devote himself to his profession. But he was not suffered to remain there, he was urged and drawn away from it by the pressing solicitations of friends and political men, all over the country, to engage again in public affairs. He has consequently been able only occasionally and as a sort of bye-business to pursue his profession. He may, ever since, be said to have lived and

breathed in the public institutions of the country. To them all his energies, all his thoughts, all his reflections have been devoted. How then could he compete with others in the management and acquisition of private property? But Mr. Webster does not stand alone in this particular, Mr. Pitt was embarrassed; his country, after his death, paid his debts; was he therefore unfit to manage public affairs? Jefferson and Hamilton were embarrassed; who doubts their competency? Mr. Clay has been embarrassed, and his debts have been paid for him. Who will stand up and say that he is not an accomplished and efficient statesman?

There is a similarity in some respects, in the fate and fortune of these two men—Clay and Webster—that is very striking. They were born without any patrimonial estate. They inherited from their parents, poverty and a good honest name. They have devoted the best days of their lives to the public interests. The highest and noblest aspirations of their lives, have been to blend their names with their country's history—to go down to posterity in that history as their country's benefactors. They have filled public places which have yielded but little emolument—not sufficient to give them a comfortable subsistence, considering the position they occupied and the expenses to which they were necessarily subjected. Who then will attempt to brand them, by charging poverty upon them? What a parallel is here presented for our contemplation! Must that parallel continue? Or will our Republic wake up and confute the charge so often made, that Republics are ungrateful?

But if this parallel is to continue, Mr. Webster like Clay, is to be thrust aside. If the idea which has gone abroad, is to prevail—that distinguished talents and services are not to be rewarded, what is the consequence? Such men will seek other pursuits—pursuits which will enable them to accumulate wealth, the want of which is made such a reproach. And you may have hereafter Stephen Girards and John Jacob Astors—but no more Henry Clays or Daniel Websters.

We are now brought to the consideration of the subject of availability. Different opinions are entertained on this subject. Some think it ought to be discarded altogether; others appear to look upon it as entitled to the most prominent importance. They scarcely look at anything else. Their only inquiry is,—will he *run*? Thus, mankind are always inclined to run into extremes. It would not do utterly to disregard it; if so, votes would often be merely thrown away. But it must certainly be considered as subordinate to qualification, and it ought not to prevail at all, unless there is some clear and solid ground for supposing that a candidate would not be acceptable to the people. Politicians who sometimes undertake to guide in this matter, ought not to set up their own personal preferences, much less ought they to be actuated by sordid and selfish motives. This question of availability is altogether premature at present. At

this stage of the business, every one who has a voice in the matter ought to consult his own views of what would be best for the country under all the circumstances, and what candidate would be the most likely to promote the true interests of the country. The proper time for touching at all on the more subordinate question of availability, would be at the General Convention. Then, by comparing views, that question could be judiciously adjusted. But, to do this, it is manifest that in primarily selecting the members of the Convention, the different sections should consult and examine for themselves upon the subject of qualification. If each section should act, not upon its own views, but upon the probable conjectures as to what are the views in other quarters, you would get in the Convention, not the candid opinions of the different sections, but simply their conjectures as to what other sections might think. The result would be, an utter absence of truthfulness.

I have indulged in these remarks, however, simply to place the subject in what I consider its true light, and not to shrink from the investigation of the matter now.

I do not hesitate to declare my entire conviction that Mr. WEBSTER is at this time decidedly the most available candidate that can be selected *from any party*, to go before the people of this country. I wish every part of my proposition to be distinctly regarded. By the *People*, I mean not the *Politicians*—the middle-men, as Mr. Burke calls them—but the rank and file, the real bone and sinew of the country.

I am prepared to prove it.

Mr. WEBSTER, whenever and wherever he goes, commands more attention and regard among the people than any other candidate. Whether in the country or the city, in this direction or that direction, they are always anxious to meet him, to greet him, to hear him. There is no man in this country, except Mr. CLAY, who so completely fills the public eye—who commands so much popular attention. This has increased within a few years past; but it is not of short growth—it is of long continuance.

Look at him in the South—at Virginia Springs for instance—where the people congregated from the distance of many miles to see and hear him. Follow him to Dunkirk, thence to Buffalo, when thousands assembled and stood for hours, not only in the open air, but in a heavy shower of rain, listening with anxious attention to the lessons of wisdom which fell from his lips.

I, sometime since, went to Metropolitan Hall to hear the warbling of that melodious Scandinavian Nightingale who had lately visited our shores. That large building was filled to overflowing!—all were alive to the scene, and wrapped in breathless amazement! All at once some one discovered that Mr. WEBSTER was in the gallery. A thousand voices made the vast hall ring! The songstress was motionless and still amid the shouts and huzzas for WEBSTER! After

some ten or fifteen minutes he arose and bowed to the audience. The melody was then again heard. Now, can any man believe, that Mr. Webster was unpopular with that audience?

Last winter, when he came on here to address the Historical Society, he remained over Sunday; a sermon was to be delivered by a popular pulpit orator to the young men of the city, on some public occasion; Mr. Webster was invited by a friend to accompany him to that Church; he went late; the Church was filled with young men collected promiscuously from every part of the city; as he was seen walking up the aisle, the whole audience rose to their feet and continued standing till he took his seat. There were, of course, no shouts. That solemn stillness which the influence of religion can inspire, reigned. And yet, how deep and impressive was the eloquence of that silence in developing the emotions of the soul! Would those young men, thus regarding him, refuse to support him for the highest office in the gift of our Republic?

I have adverted to those few instances, among the vast number that might be cited if we had time, in order to illustrate my argument. I hasten to give you the result. The public man whom the people of all ages—of all classes—in our cities—in the country—in every part and portion of the whole country, wherever he goes, run after, admire, desire to hear, to greet, to pay him every degree of respect and consideration—that man cannot be unpopular. There is one trait in the character of Mr. Webster, in his public intercourse and debates, that deserves particular notice, and which distinguishes him from most other public speakers. He treats his opponents with respect, and states their arguments fairly, and thus his opponents are not turned into personal enemies.

But although we have nothing to fear from the great body of the people, we must nevertheless admit that there are serious difficulties in the way. I shall now endeavor to point out where the real difficulty lies.

Our Constitution places the elective franchise in the hands of the people. But it is not so in practice. The body of the people exercise only one branch of the elective power—*usages*, in the course of time, rise up and become connected with all law, whether municipal or fundamental. They form what is called the Unwritten Common Law. When they become engrafted upon the constitution, they form what may be called Constitutional Common Law. If they do not acquire the same kind of legitimate force, which the constitution possesses—they are often, like manners, quite as potent in their operations. We are divided in this country always into great parties, which parties have generally been considered the bane of Republics—but an idea now prevails extensively in this country, that they are essential to liberty. I shall not discuss that matter now. But, in the actual workings of our institutians through these parties, the candidates for high offices, are selected by active

political partizans, whom Burke calls the *middle-men*. They have a regular course of machinery to move—and woe be to the candidate, who attempts to escape the application of their engineering. By means of this, they prepare the respective candidates, who are laid before the people, to be voted for. In this respect, there is a resemblance between these movements, in regard to the elective franchise, and the proceedings in the ancient Republics, in matters of Legislation, where some Senatorial, or other body prepared the laws, and thus prepared, they were laid before the people, for their enactment by vote.

It is in this common law branch of the constitution, among these middle-men or political partizans, that the real difficulty lies. I do not mean to insinuate, that they are actuated by any sinister motive —but they are mistaken in their views. If you talk to these men, you will find them all in favour of Mr. Webster, but they shrug their shoulders and say "it is impossible—he will not run with the people and therefore we ought not to take him up. It would be a glory to this country, to have such a chief magistrate—it would add to our respect abroad—but we cannot elect him—it will not do."

Thus we find that every body is in favor of Mr. Webster, but, all this class seems to think that every body is against him. Have you not all witnessed this state of things. It is passing strange, and I was unable to account for this strange paradox till I looked into it a little more closely. On inquiry of these people the reason for their opinion, I found invariably they expressed the apprehension that Mr. Webster was *too great a man* to run with the people. That the people had no sympathy with great men and would not vote for them.

Now this I do not hesitate to pronounce a most *damnable political heresy!*—(Loud cheers.) A heresy of the most dangerous consequence. One which it behoves us, as we value our political existence and prosperity, to put down. If for no other reason, than to put it down, we ought to use our utmost exertion to prevent its application to this case, and have Mr. Webster nominated. Why such a principle would discourage all efforts on the part of great minds to acquire distinction. It would destroy all stimulus to great exertion. Like the Upas it would blight everything which approached it.

It is as false too, in fact, as it is dangerous and destructive in its consequences. It is not true that the people do not sympathise with able and efficient men. On the contrary, mankind are so constituted as to admire such men, and to be disposed to support and encourage them; this is natural. The great masses of the community act out their natural feelings, and give them fair play. It is a wise provision of nature. When mankind admire ability and efficiency it encourages minds, gifted by nature, to become by industry able and efficient, and thus useful to the community.

People never object to a man because he is great. Pride, vanity, and ostentation constitute objections, and they are objectionable to the people whether they appear in great men or in pretenders to greatness. Here is also a wise provision, for such qualities destroy all sympathy with the common class of mankind—all disposition to consult their interests and promote their happiness.

Is Mr. Webster one of that description? Let the mechanics of Boston—the farmers of New Hampshire—or the farmers and fishermen of Marshfield answer that question. I have heard it said that Mr. Webster was taken up as a candidate in this city by the rich bankers and merchants of Wall street. And this has been said with a view to blight his prospects with the people. You know better, you know very well that where there was one of that description, there were a dozen boss mechanics who joined in bringing him forward.

The people can distinguish between pride and ostentation, and that kind of retired habit which results from diffidence or deep reflection. Some of the most retired men I have ever known have been the freest from vanity and pride. Witness the late Dr. Alexander, of Princeton, one of the most modest men that ever lived, and yet no one ever approached him without the conviction that he was a truly great man. Why, we have among our own citizens a distinguished merchant whose munificent philanthropy has carried an enterprise, so honorable to our whole nation, into the very frozen seas; and yet this gentleman, from a retiring disposition, modestly declines the public testimonials laid at his feet. Do you think, however, that if Mr. Henry Grinnell should be proposed as a candidate for an honorable public office, that *unpopularity* could be urged against *his* availability? (Great applause.)

Mr. Webster is a man of deep reflection, and therefore often retired—but that profound reflection has served to impart those qualifications which ought to be his passport through preliminary political conventions to the people, who, if he once gets fairly before them, will soon show you that he is *the most popular candidate* that can be presented for their suffrages, by any party or any set of men.

But, from some strange cause or other the notion has, within a few years past, among politicians, become prevalent in this country, that very great men will not run before the people. They may not always run. There are exceptions to all general rules. A great man by his peculiar course of conduct may have made many warm friends and many bitter enemies. He may be violent and arbitrary in his views, unconciliating and bitter in debate when opposed. Mr. Webster is known to be exempted from that objection.

It is time this notion should be discarded. It has no solid foundation to rest upon. No country ever did or ever will rise to greatness or glory without master minds. Look back at Greece or

Rome. The *London Times* has lately broached the idea that Mr. WEBSTER could not be made President, because he is too great a man. It is not surprising that the editor of that distinguished paper should think so, because he is prejudiced against Republican institutions and knows but little of the working of ours. In him, it is a sneer at us. for he knows very well that England has been distinguished for her galaxy of great men—that from Cecil, under the lofty and imperial Queen. down to Lord Derby in the reign of the pure and virtuous Victoria, a long line of statesmen, able, distinguished, of large views, have guided and regulated English affairs, and have raised England to the height where she now stands.

What could have given rise to this strange infatuation in this country? Is there any thing in our example different from the example of other great countries? We started into existence but yesterday, speaking in reference to the age of nations. We rose up under the auspices of WASHINGTON—the man of the largest and most comprehensive mind of his age—and surrounded with men of great and distinguished ability. We now stretch from the Atlantic to the shores of the Pacific. The Commerce of the World is within our grasp—our Mines are inexhaustible—our territory, unparalled in extent and fertility, is to be filled up. What a prospect is here presented for future glory and greatness. Are we to rise to this glory and greatness without the lead and guidance of *master minds?* If we are, then the laws of human conduct in our case are to be reversed. And if not reversed, we must, if we attempt it, dwindle into insignificance. A European philosopher once remarked, that every thing in this country was on a great scale, but its *men.* It is to be hoped that the politicians in this country, under this strange infatuation will not verify this remark.

Mankind are often misled by the use of terms. A sort of hazy idea is often attached to the epithet of a *great man.* It is sometimes said there is no magic in words. It is true there is no magic in them to elicit truth—but they are often magical in leading us into error. There are various kinds of greatness often referred to, and in such a way as to cause confusion. The man of wealth, accumulated by great industry, judgment, and attention to business, is sometimes and very properly called a great man, though it may not be of the very highest order. No one accuses Mr. WEBSTER of being a great man in that sense.

In some countries they have a body of great men, whose main distinction, consists in their descent through a long line of distinguished ancestors—ennobled by titles—emblazoned by stars and ribbons, and garters. Mr. WEBSTER has no such distinction. He is the Hapsburgh of his own family. His root is in the earth—amidst the rocks of his own New Hampshire. He sprang from the people. Though his intellect is elevated far above them by culture, yet true to his origin, his heart is in the midst of them.

There is another kind of greatness to be considered. It may be called legitimate greatness—such as the head of man approves, and his heart recognises. It is in short *ability* and *efficiency* for *great* employments. To the reproach of this kind of greatness, if in the eyes of his countrymen it be a reproach, Mr. WEBSTER must bow in silence. By natural intellect combined with vast acquirements, long experience and profound reflection, he is the greatest statesman of his country. Will any politician go before the people and make this objection to him? Yet this is the objection, if there be any at all. Substitute for the name of *great man*, the terms, an *able and efficient* man for *great* employment, and the objection vanishes. Every man becomes ashamed of it.

It is a plain maxim of political economy—it is a dictate of common sense, that if you want an agent to transact any business great or small, select a man who is the ablest and most fit to do it. Is this dictate of common sense and sound political economy to be discarded in making a President? Mankind are so constituted, as to admire ability and efficiency, for the performance of any honest and praiseworthy employment. I would rather see a good shoemaker, than a poor politician.

If by some magic power, I should have the authority conferred upon me to select public officers, I would endeavor to be guided by this plain maxim I have stated. If I wanted a Commander to lead our army to the field, and to raise our standard upon the loftiest battlements of the enemy, I would select GENERAL SCOTT. If I wanted a naval officer to conduct our fleet over the mountain wave, and unfurl our flag to the battle and the breeze, COMMODORE STOCKTON, should be my man. If I wanted a Chief Executive Officer of the Government, to carry the country safely through all political commotions and difficulties at home and abroad, and by his profound statesmanship, elevate the glory of his country among the nations of the earth, and give them assurance of a man, I would present you with DANIEL WEBSTER. (Immense cheering.)

I have now gentlemen, pointed out the difficulty. The remedy will at once suggest itself to all of you. It is to remove that difficulty—let the notion be discarded, that the people of this country cannot distinguish and appreciate their greatest public man. If this is done and he is presented as a candidate before that people, his election is sure. Every effort should be made by every right thinking man to put down this gross and dangerous heresy.

There are some further topics which, to my mind, are of great importance, to be considered, but I am afraid I have already trespassed too long upon your patience. (Cries of "go on")

The considerations I am going to present have, I must confess, operated very powerfully on myself, in leading me to the course I have taken; for, as I have told you, I discard all personal considerations in a matter of this grave and important character to the country.

Whoever has attentively viewed the course of public affairs among us, must have perceived that the standard of qualification for high offices has been gradually lowered. It has been seen and felt, and deeply deplored. The natural consequence has been, that the bonds of Government are relaxed, and are becoming more and more loose. Treason is no longer, in public estimation, what treason was some thirty or forty years ago. It certainly is not owing to any prejudice on the part of the *People* against the most able and efficient men, for the reasons I have already explained.

But, whatever may be the cause, every good man must be impressed with the importance of furnishing some adequate and speedy remedy.

There is a tendency under all free Governments to a great variety of opinions, especially on public affairs. When men are free to speak and think, they will think differently. Many men will have many minds. Where there is one man of a large and comprehensive grasp of mind, there are a hundred active, sharp, subtle, but narrow intellects. The pride of opinion in these men is always the strongest. They look only at one side, and hence they see no difficulties. As Sir William Temple says, "Their own reason they make the certain standard of Truth, and their own knowledge, of what is posssible in Nature."

In all free Governments, the central power must be more or less weakened, and that of the local municipalities increased. This is requisite, in order to spread among the people a practical knowledge of public affairs, and to prepare and fit them to watch over their liberties. But the natural result of it is, to multiply indefinitely among the people, divisions of opinion upon public affairs. Party spirit is thus engendered, and it becomes continually more and more prevalent. Patriotism, which is supposed to be the great and essential element of Republicanism, yields to the influences of these divisions, and men give up to party what belongs to their country. Hence the maxim so often met with in political writings, that faction and discord are the bane of all Republics. These political divisions lead to general licentiousness, and men of propriety, of character, of peaceful and conservative dispositions, become ready to take refuge in some strong Government. We see it exemplified in the late French Republic.

But when this popular dissension assumes a *sectional* character, the danger is increased and brought nearer. Sections are enlisted against sections. It is not only a contest between parties, but between parties occupying separate and large territories of the country. Animosity is hence doubly increased, and responsibility in the same ratio diminished. If this Government should fall, it will more probably break up into sectional fragments long before party licentiousness prepares the public mind for the introduction of a stronger government.

What is the remedy? We are unwilling to increase the power of the general Government. But we may increase its *moral* power and influence—and that is to be done by raising instead of lowering the standard of qualification for high offices. This is not to be done by diffusing the idea that the man best qualified is too great for the people. Act in public affairs as every prudent man does in his private affairs. Employ those best qualified and fitted for the business to be done. This remedy will be found effectual. We have only to look back upon our past political history. Whenever a great mind has been at the head of this Government he has been able to carry on the Government with most efficiency, notwithstanding party dissensions. Such was the case with Washington and Jefferson.

Does any one believe that this remedy, or that any remedy at all is not needed? We have, I am aware, been accused as a people of being a little vain-glorious—of thinking we can do anything and everything, and yet, that under the influence of our manifest destiny, all will be safe. Let no one suppose we are exempted from the common lot of humanity. Let no one take that flattering unction to his soul.

There is but one further topic and on that I will detain you but a very short time. And that is in reference to our Foreign Relations. Society in Europe seems to be in a transition state. New classes are springing up in society out of the old, and acquiring influence in the state. This causes, from time to time, a general upheaving of the moral elements. Has it ceased? Certainly not. It will continue as long as mankind continue to advance in wealth and knowledge. They will advance thus, while improvements and new facilities of intercourse and commerce continue to be opened up. Rail roads, canals, magnetic telegraphs are great revolutionists.

Changes in government becoming necessary by the increase and extension of knowledge and wealth, cannot be effected without commotion and conflict. There is a speck of war in the European horizon. It may not burst forth this year or the next—and it may the year after. When it shall come, what will be our condition? If we avoid intervention with them, can we prevent their intervention with us? We could not do it in the long wars which devastated Europe in the days of the great Napoleon.—Our proximity has since changed from forty to ten days. Suppose difficulties should arise, we must prepare for the exigency. If they threaten to sweep our commerce from the ocean as they did before, we may ward off the threatened blow by appeals to their justice, by pointing out in clear and strong language the falsity of their views, and the gross violation of international law, which their conduct would involve. A clear and powerful exposition of the real attitude in which we may stand, may be of immense value both in reference to them and ourselves.

Let me suppose such a case to arise, and that the very panic created, should throw our business in confusion, threaten a general bankruptcy and paralyze all operations, and that you should be collected here as you now are—that in place of the chairman and myself, this platform should be occupied by all the present candidates for the Presidency, and you had time to hear a speech from some *one, and one only,* of them—setting forth our real position, the dangers and difficulties we had to apprehend, the best means of avoiding them, or the best mode of encountering them, whom would you call out? Whom would you wish to hear? (Cries of WEBSTER! WEBSTER!!) Is there a man in the country, who would not want in such an exigency to hear him in preference to any other? Yet, we are told the people would not put him in the appropriate place, from which his opinions should emanate, because forsooth, he is too great a man. It is time that this senseless objection should be abandoned. (Mr. Wood sat down amid long and loud cheering)

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